

*STATE OF TENNESSEE*

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# Agency Strategic Plans

Executive Branch



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Five-Year Strategic Plans

Phil Bredesen, Governor

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*The following BOPP report is excerpted  
from a larger state report that includes information  
on all Tennessee state government agencies.*

*Only BOPP specific information is listed here.*

# **Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole**

The Board of Probation and Parole contributes to public safety by managing the orderly release and supervision of adult offenders in such a manner as to promote lawful behavior and minimize risk to the general public. The General Assembly established the Board of Probation and Parole in 1999 by merging the Division of Adult Probation from the Department of Correction with the Board of Paroles. The agency has several functions, including conducting hearings, the community supervision of offenders, administering the Community Corrections Grant Program, and providing administrative support services.

The Board of Probation and Parole is an independent state board comprised of seven members appointed by the Governor. The Board is responsible for determining which offenders will be granted parole and subsequently released from incarceration to community-based supervision. The Board Members and Hearings Officers conduct parole hearings at state penal institutions and local jails. Hearings Officers, appointed by the Chairman of the Board, make recommendations to the Board Members. Additionally, the Board makes non-binding recommendations to the Governor regarding executive clemency.

The Division of Field Services supervises parolees and offenders placed on probation by state criminal and circuit courts. The Field Services Division facilitates the reintegration of probationers and parolees into the community, thereby minimizing public safety risk and promoting lawful behavior. Probation and Parole Officers supervise and monitor offenders to ensure they meet their individual conditions of release and the standards of community supervision. The Division of Field Services is composed of eight districts across the state and has 49 field offices. The district and field offices work closely with other community resources, including law enforcement, treatment services, and other non-profit groups to promote overall offender success and public safety.

The Board also administers the Community Corrections Grant Program, which diverts felony offenders from incarceration by placing them in locally operated grant programs with intensive supervision, community service work, and victim restitution. Grant dollars fund 19 local agencies responsible for the intensive supervision of probationers sentenced by the courts. These programs emphasize treatment and vary in program type; some are residential programs, while others provide intensive community supervision.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole is to minimize public risk and promote lawful behavior by the prudent, orderly release and community supervision of adult offenders.

## Goals

1. Through FY 2013, the Board of Probation and Parole will maintain an employee turnover rate of no more than eight percent.
2. Through 2013, the Board of Probation and Parole will improve the offender success rate by decreasing the percentage of probationers and parolees whose parole is revoked by ten percent to 10.3 percent.
3. By FY 2013, the Board of Probation and Parole will manage caseloads by increasing the successful offenders reclassified to lower risk levels by ten percent to 9.8 percent (discounting offenders moved off of “intake” supervision level).
4. By FY 2013, the Board of Probation and Parole will reduce the number of grant hearings administratively continued by fifteen percent to 5.1 percent.
5. By FY 2013, the Board of Probation and Parole will gather baseline data from six stakeholder groups regarding their satisfaction with our level of service.

### Goal 1

Through FY 2013, the Board of Probation and Parole will maintain an employee turnover rate of no more than eight percent.

#### Strategies for Achieving Goal 1

1. Improve the staff training program and revise new employee orientation so that all staff know how important they are to the agency and are appropriately trained for success. Additionally, provide all employees with an opportunity to experience probation and parole supervision work and the hearing process first-hand by riding along with field officers and attending parole hearings at institutions.
2. Increase organizational appreciation and public recognition of staff achievements by planning activities for the National Probation and Parole Week, highlighting successes in the agency’s “Good News” publication, rewarding outstanding performance, and encouraging team-building activities.
3. Offer greater opportunities for staff to serve on committees or in advisory roles to increase their input in policy development and decision-making.
4. Continue to thoroughly screen candidates for employment and recruit individuals most likely to be successful in an effort to hire the best caliber staff possible.
5. Analyze staff exit patterns and identify and address reasons people leave the agency.

#### Performance Measure

1. Percent of turnover for all Board of Probation and Parole employees, including voluntary and involuntary separations and retirements.

FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%

## Goal 2

Through FY 2013, the Board of Probation and Parole will improve the offender success rate by decreasing the percentage of probationers and parolees whose parole is revoked by ten percent to 10.3 percent.

### Strategies for Achieving Goal 2

1. Improve the Administrative Case Review Committee process by establishing a Field Advisory Committee to clearly define the program to ensure statewide consistency, establish appropriate program sanctions, and to improve the training curriculum of panel members.
2. Increase the use of positive reinforcements with offenders.
3. Update the Offender Resource Manual by district, identifying new and existing state and local resources available to offenders.
4. Increase the use of referral resources such as treatment programs, offender employment, and job training and educational programs to encourage offender success.
5. Improve the officer training program by developing and delivering an offender-centered curriculum that encourages offender success and the strategies to reach it.
6. Research national best practices and implement where appropriate.

### Performance Measure

1. Percent of total offender population (both probationers and parolees) whose community supervision status is revoked during the fiscal year (not including offenders in the Community Corrections Program).

FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
11.2%	11.0%	10.7%	10.5%	10.3%	10.3%

## Goal 3

By 2013, the Board of Probation and Parole will manage caseloads by increasing the successful offenders reclassified to lower risk levels by ten percent to 9.8 percent (discounting offenders moved off of “intake” supervision level).

### Strategies for Achieving Goal 3

1. Develop a plan of supervision program to clearly inform offenders of supervision expectations and incentives for successful behavior.
2. Insure that all offenders are supervised at the level appropriate for their individual circumstances.
3. Monitor and research the use and over-riding risk and needs assessment instruments by increasing supervisory monitoring, performing Technical Services audits, and tracking over-ride data.
4. Research national best practices and implement where appropriate.

## **Performance Measure**

1. Percent of total offender population (both probationers and parolees) who are reclassified to a lower risk level after exhibiting successful behavior.

FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
9.1%	9.3%	9.5%	9.6%	9.8%	9.8%

## **Goal 4**

By FY 2013, the Board of Probation and Parole will reduce the number of grant hearings previously administratively continued to 5.1 percent.

### **Strategies for Achieving Goal 4**

1. Improve the content of the official versions of all sentencing reports.
2. Complete offense reports on time.
3. Continue to track the need for psychological evaluations and ensure that they are performed according to schedule.
4. Monitor foreign jurisdiction dockets.

## **Performance Measure**

1. Percent of all initial parole, parole review, rescission (pre-parole), and custodial hearings that are continued for administrative reasons.

FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
5.6%	5.4%	5.3%	5.2%	5.1%	5.1%

## **Goal 5**

By FY 2012, the Board of Probation and Parole will gather baseline data from six stakeholder groups regarding their satisfaction with the level of service received.

### **Strategies for Achieving Goal 5**

1. Develop unique surveys to elicit feedback on the level of satisfaction from each of the following stakeholder groups: 1) Probation and Parole Officers; 2) offenders under BOPP supervision; 3) offenders' family members; 4) crime victims; 5) offender employers; and 6) judicial staff.
2. Develop and implement a process to periodically survey a sample of each stakeholder group.
3. Create a mechanism to capture survey data that will automatically generate aggregate result data, as well as maintain the integrity of granular raw data.
4. Use survey data to identify agency successes, areas in need of improvement, and to develop action plans for any problem areas.

## Performance Measure

1. Number of stakeholder groups for whom baseline data has been collected.

FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
2	3	4	5	6	6

## Additional Agency Information

### Statutory and Constitutional Objectives

Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 40, Part 28, establishes the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole and defines the agency's responsibilities related to parole hearings and the supervision of offenders. The Board decides which eligible felony offenders will be granted parole and released from incarceration. The Board is then responsible for the supervision of parolees granted release and of felony offenders who are placed on probation by criminal courts (T.C.A. 40-28-103). Administrative duties of the Board include setting criteria for granting and revoking parole; developing a strategic plan, annual budget and staffing plans; and policies and procedures (T.C.A. 40-28-104.)

TCA 40-39-201, et.seq. establishes the Tennessee Sexual Offender and Violent Sexual Offender Registration, Verification, and Tracking Act of 2004. The statute outlines the Board's responsibilities related to the registration of certain sex offenders.

In July 2004, the General Assembly enacted the "Tennessee Serious and Violent Sex Offender Monitoring Pilot Project Act" in TCA 40-39-301, et.seq. This statute authorizes the Board of Probation and Parole's use of satellite-based monitoring of offenders using global positioning systems (GPS).

In addition to the offenders under the Board of Probation and Parole's supervision, the agency administers the "Tennessee Community Corrections Act of 1985," codified at TCA 40-36-101, et. seq. The Community Corrections Program provides services and programs in local jurisdictions for eligible felony offenders in lieu of incarceration in state penal institutions or local jails. The Board awards grants to 19 agencies across the state that provide intensive supervision, treatment, and/or residential services.

The Governor has designated responsibility to the Board for reviewing all clemency requests. Using criteria established by the Governor, the Board hears clemency matters and submits non-binding recommendations for consideration by the Governor.

### Obstacles to Meeting Objectives and Delivering Services and Means of Overcoming Obstacles

**Obstacle 1** – Steady population increases have and will continue to present the Board of Probation and Parole with obstacles relative to service delivery. Between fiscal year 1999-2000 and fiscal year 2006-2007, the Division of Field Services has had a 26.6 percent growth in the total offender population. The Community Corrections Program experienced a 28.6 percent growth in the total offender population between fiscal year 1999-2000 and fiscal year 2006-2007.

The Division of Field Services strives to maintain a ratio of one Officer for every 75 offenders, which allows for Officers to spend adequate time with each offender under their supervision. In fiscal year 2008, BOPP maintained an average caseload size of one Officer for every 91 offenders, but would like to reach a ratio of 1:75. Large caseload sizes inhibit individual Officer attention, and ultimately offender success. Ideally, Officer caseload sizes will become smaller, allowing Officers the opportunity to be more proactive with each offender in helping them find and maintain employment, obtain substance abuse and mental health treatment (as needed), and obtain job training and additional education. In FY08, BOPP was provided 113 new field services positions, 98 of which are Probation and Parole Officers.

To overcome the increasing offender population and daunting caseload sizes, BOPP plans to engage in activities, through both technology and engaging in proven methods of supervision that will allow successful caseload management. The expansion of wireless capability, an automated reporting system for low-risk offenders, and a user-friendly offender case management system will free up valuable Officer time. Additionally, the Division of Field Services will focus its efforts on high-risk offenders and reduce its supervision levels for low risk offenders. Studies show that supervision by itself is not associated with decreases in recidivism, but supervision linked with appropriate treatment interventions can make a difference. BOPP recently implemented Think BIG, an agency wide initiative to improve offender success in the community to incorporate best practices into supervision.

### **Means of Maximizing Federal and Other Non-State Sources of Revenue**

State appropriations are the primary source of funding for the Probation and Parole program. Revenues generated by the Board of Probation and Parole consists of fees collected from probationers and parolees, as mandated by statute. Supervision fees for the Probation and Parole program are collected and used to offset the costs of probationer and parolee supervision. Each year, the Board, in conjunction with the Budget Office, determines the most appropriate expenditure of these dollars. Fee dollars are spent on items such as: salaries and benefits for 85 Probation and Parole Officer positions, drug testing/screening and confirmations, replacement computer equipment for field staff, mental health evaluations; and officer safety equipment.

In addition to supervision fees, officers collect fees from offenders that go into the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund. Over \$3,000,000 went into this fund in FY07.

The Community Corrections Grant Program is also funded primarily by state dollars. Eligible offenders are required to pay supervision fees. These dollars are used to offset requisite state funding.

### **Means of Avoiding Unnecessary Costs and Expenditures**

The Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury issued its most recent Performance Audit of the Board in May of 2006 and a Financial and Compliance Audit in June 2007.

In addition to implementing recommendations from the Comptroller, the Board also regularly assesses operations to insure the necessity of costs and expenditures. Through internal inspections and reviews, activity monitoring, technological advancements, and collaborative committees, BOPP strives to meet agency objectives using available resources efficiently. BOPP's Research, Policy, and Planning Division inspects all BOPP office locations, as well as Community Corrections agencies on an annual basis. The inspections insure compliance with statutes, rules



and regulations, policies, and agency goals. The inspections result in reports that are distributed to agency management. Corrective action is required when inspections reveal non-compliance. Additionally, this division annually reviews and updates operational policy and procedures to insure continued compliance with applicable laws and standards.

### **Future Challenges and Opportunities**

Tennessee's growing offender population will continue to be a challenge for the Board of Probation and Parole and Community Corrections Agencies. This growth, compounded with increasingly higher-risk and more needy offenders, will test the Board's resources. In response, BOPP will research ways to improve operations using available resources. Expanded collaboration with other state and local entities, treatment providers, social service resources, and private employers holds promise for encouraging offender success. Technological advancements may additionally offer alternative supervision tools that will enable officers to focus their efforts on higher risk offenders. Studying the accomplishments of other states in reducing recidivism and increasing offender success should improve the Board's ability to engage in best practices and enjoy the same achievement level. Staff training also provides BOPP with a significant opportunity to increase overall success by amplifying its highly dedicated and hard-working team.